

AbstinenceNews

NEBRASKA ABSTINENCE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Spring 2007 • Vol. 4 • No.1

The Art of Parenting

Parenting the Thrill Seeker By Michael Huckabee

It is well established that parents are the most influential factor in teen sexual decision making. With this critical responsibility, how should a parent guide their teen through the challenges of adolescence?

Parents of “thrill seekers” face even greater challenges. These teens have an enthusiastic zest for life, but also present many dilemmas for parents. Protecting and guiding these teens through the dangerous but tempting waters of risky behaviors (including sexual activity) requires intentional parenting efforts.

One parenting approach is the use of “fear appeals” to effectively reach risk-taking teens. This involves answering two basic questions posed by the thrill seeker: 1) Am I personally at risk? and 2) What can I do about it?

For fear appeals to work effectively, both questions must be answered, so that the teen is accurately informed about the true risks (threat), and provided with what they can do for safety (efficacy). Telling a free-spirited child to stop running in the street will not be fully understood unless it is also explained that there are cars that can hurt or kill a child (the real threat), and also

teaching that the child can hold a parents’ hand when entering the street for safety (efficacy).

Teens who hear about a risky situation (threat), but are not given a sense of what they can do for protection (efficacy), are more likely to disbelieve the threat, and accuse the parents of scare tactics. For example, just showing teens photos of the effects of sexually-transmitted infections (STIs) may suggest a high threat, but it will not be as effective if there is no discus-

sion of what can be done about it. However, teens who understand a balance of high threat with high efficacy have a more favorable attitude toward the desired behavior.

To support teens in making responsible sexual health decisions, parents should inform them of the risks associated with sexual activity, but should balance those threats with what can be done to protect the teen. The best protection is to save the sexual relationship for marriage, which minimizes, if not removes, the threat of STIs or unwed pregnancy.

Further discussion of this and other effective parenting strategies will be included in the Pure Parenting Seminar sponsored by the Lincoln Crisis Pregnancy Center on May 22 from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. at the Calvert Center in Lincoln. The seminar features presenters Deb Hershberger and Michael Huckabee (who together have nearly 30 years of experience speaking to teens and parents on responsible sexual health). A special guest panel of post-teen young adults will highlight the evening, and all attendants will receive the newly published Pure Parenting Guidebook. Parents are invited to this free event to discuss practical parenting skills to help children save sex for marriage. For more information or to reserve your spot at the seminar, call 402-483-4247.



It's life control!
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Building Character in Kids

“**G**ood character is not formed automatically; it is developed over time through a sustained process of teaching, example, learning, and practice – it is developed through character education. The intentional



teaching of good character is particularly important in today's society since our youth face many opportunities and dangers unknown to earlier generations.”

Dr. Thomas Lickona, author of Educating for Character

Building character in children and youth goes hand-in-hand with abstinence education. By learning and establishing an understanding of and respect for others, youth are more likely to make healthy choices. Choosing abstinence reflects qualities of personal integrity.

There are many models of character education programs and curriculum. The Character Education Partnership's *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education*, provide the following guidelines for the elements needed for **effective, comprehensive,** character education in schools.

- Promotes core ethical values
- Teaches students to understand, care about, and act upon these core ethical values
- Encompasses all aspects of the school culture

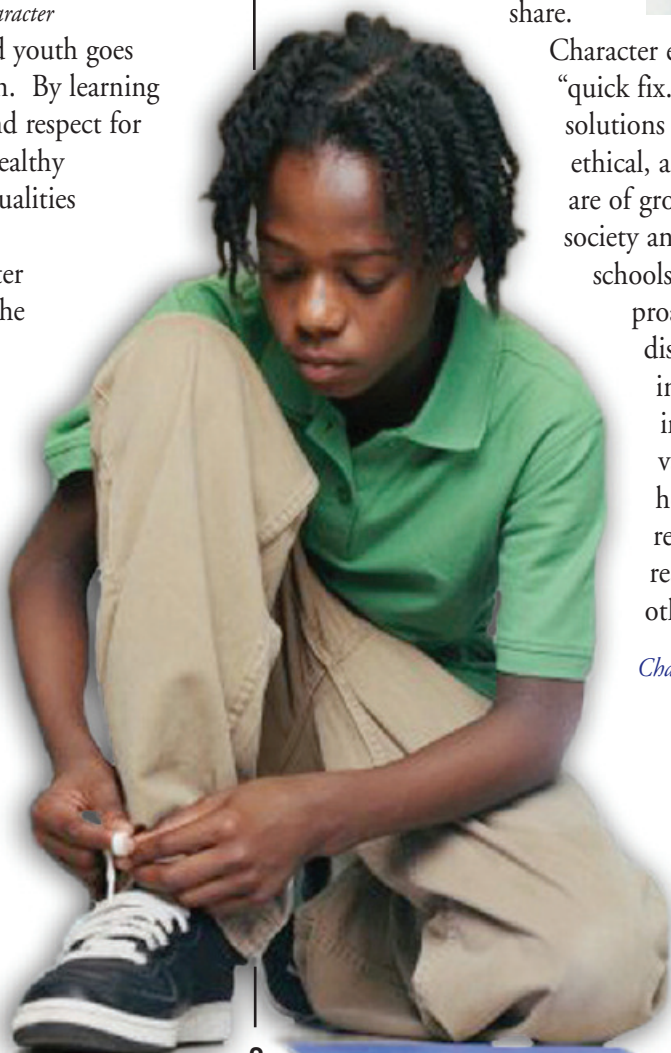
- Fosters a caring school community
- Offers opportunities for moral action
- Supports academic achievement
- Develops intrinsic motivation
- Includes whole-staff involvement
- Requires positive leadership of staff and students
- Involves parents and community members
- Assesses results and strives to improve

“Character education fosters ethical, responsible, and caring young people by modeling and teaching good character through emphasis on universal values that we all share.



Character education is not a “quick fix.” It provides long-term solutions that address moral, ethical, and academic issues that are of growing concern about our society and the safety of our schools. It is the intentional, proactive effort by schools, districts, and states to instill in their students important core, ethical values such as caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility, and respect for self and others.”

Character Education Partnership



Consequences of Underage Drinking Cost State and Nation

Reproduced from Project Extra Mile newsletter, March, 2007

Underage drinking cost the citizens of the United States \$60.3 billion in 2005 according to research from the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation. Of those costs, Nebraska accounted for \$447 million, which was up from the last assessment in 2001 of \$435 million.

These costs include medical care, work loss and pain and suffering associated with the multiple problems resulting from the

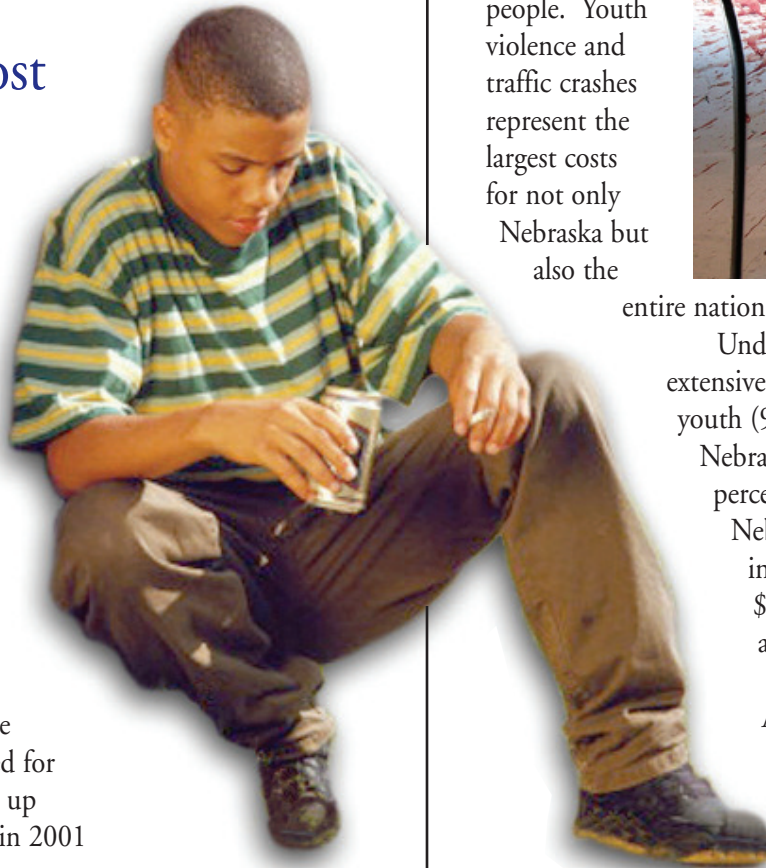
use of alcohol by young people. Youth violence and traffic crashes represent the largest costs for not only Nebraska but also the



entire nation.

Underage drinking in Nebraska is extensive with nearly 83,000 underage youth (9-12 graders) drinking each year. Nebraska youth consumed 21.7 percent of all alcohol sold in Nebraska, totaling \$154 million in sales and contributing to \$75 million in profits to the alcohol industry.

"These numbers are alarming. Alcohol is illegal for kids, yet nearly a quarter of all alcohol sold in Nebraska was consumed by our youth," said Robert Bonk, board president for Project Extra Mile. "It's time for community members and leaders to join together against the industry's influence and work for policy changes that will stop the preventable consequences of underage drinking and create long-term change."





Nebraska Partnerships for Positive Youth Development is up to a little monkey business. Be watching your e-mail for details on how you can join in too.

Tidbits

We finished the curriculum, “Choosing the Best Way” with the second half of the 7th graders at the Lexington Middle School. This is the first time we had a male educator for this curriculum. Comments were



good. I think he gave an insight from the male point of view that encouraged the boys to consider abstinence and for the girls, insights on how boys think about, and consequently act, with girls. The educator was enthusiastic about the curriculum and would like to teach it again.

Mary Wichelt
Lexington

RESOURCES for PARENTS

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy is pleased to announce two new tools related to parental involvement:

“Terms of Engagement” offers practical advice on how to involve parents in programs to prevent teen pregnancy. The publication identifies four common challenges for programs:

1. reaching parents in the first place
2. motivating parents to participate and keeping them involved
3. knowing what to say to parents and how to say it
4. paying for programs

It also provides corresponding strategies for addressing them. This publication was made possible with funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

This report is available for download and purchase on the Campaign’s newly redesigned Parent Portal at www.teenpregnancy.org/parent.

Please take the new interactive quiz for parents called Parent Power. For youth program personnel and educators, this is a great activity to incorporate into your outreach with parents on teen pregnancy prevention.

Supporting Teens During Difficult Times

Abstinence is the healthiest choice for young people. Yet, not all teens hear the message and choose risky behaviors that lead to unfortunate consequences like a sexually transmitted disease or pregnancy. For a young teen, the discovery that you are pregnant can seem devastating. An unplanned pregnancy can be a lonely, difficult and confusing time.

A pilot program in Omaha offers assistance and support to women including teens facing an unplanned pregnancy. **Positive Alternatives**, directed by the Nebraska Children's Home Society began in January 2006 with services beginning in August of that year. Teens accessing **Positive Alternatives** get clear information and help in making the best decisions for them-

For more information about **Positive Alternatives** go to their website at www.positivealternatives.org. Persons wanting assistance from **Positive Alternatives** can call confidentially 1-877-420-4747. Needs of the caller are assessed and placement is made with a partner agency that is able to serve those needs.

Partnering agencies in the Omaha and Lincoln area include:



- ♀ Essential Pregnancy Services
- ♀ AAA Center for Pregnancy Counseling
- ♀ A Women's Touch Crisis Pregnancy Center
- ♀ Catholic Charities of Omaha
- ♀ Nebraskans United for Life



selves and their baby. Services include pregnancy testing, limited ultrasounds, assistance obtaining prenatal care, prenatal vitamins and folic acid, childbirth and parenting classes, fathers' programs, abstinence education, counseling and referral to other community services.

- ♀ A Women's Care Center of the Heartland
- ♀ Lincoln Crisis Pregnancy Center



Ingredients of Abstinence Education:

A Recipe for the health and well being of Nebraska Youth

There are eight ingredients to an effective abstinence until marriage program. The ingredients are often referred to as “the eight elements” of abstinence education. They are included in the original federal legislation that provides abstinence education funding to states.

State abstinence programs incorporate all eight elements into program plans when providing abstinence until marriage education to youth. By applying these elements

or ingredients, program providers give youth a recipe to follow that ensures a path to healthy adulthood. Starting today and in the

next four issues of *Abstinence News* you can learn about these eight elements and why they are important for youth.

Element A

“Has as its exclusive purpose, teaching the social, psychological, and health gains to be realized by abstaining from sexual activity.”

What it means:

- The best life outcomes are more likely obtained if an individual abstains until marriage.
- Healthy human sexuality involves enduring fidelity, love and commitment.
- Non-marital sex can undermine the capacity for healthy marriage.
- Abstinence is the only certain way to avoid the sexual transmission of sexually transmitted disease (STD).
- Acquiring an STD may potentially impact future relationships.
- Premarital sexual activity can create a pattern of relationship instability.
- Lack of commitment associated with nonmarital sex may increase the potential for emotional harm.

Element B

“Teaches abstinence from sexual activity outside marriage as the expected standard for all school age children.”

What it means:

- Teens who choose abstinence, even after they have been sexually active are likely to improve their future well-being.
- Pursuing the standard of abstinence serves to establish an understanding of and respect for others.
- Committed caring relationships requires respect for others, their feelings and their bodies.
- Abstinence reflects qualities of personal integrity and is honorable.



Abstinence Save Sex Until Marriage

NEBRASKA HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES SYSTEM



Abstinence News is published periodically by the Nebraska Abstinence Education Program and sponsored by the Nebraska Health and Human Services System

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